

Jo Anne Barnhart is the 14th Commissioner of Social Security, filling a six-year term of office that will run through January 19, 2007. She was nominated by President George W. Bush on July 17, and confirmed by the United States Senate on November 2, 2001.

As head of the Social Security Administration (SSA), she has responsibility for administering the Social Security programs (retirement, survivors and disability), as well as the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

Social Security provides financial protection to more than 152 million workers and their families, and more than 45 million Americans receive monthly Social Security retirement, disability or survivors benefits. The SSI program pays monthly benefits to more than 6.6 million Americans who have little or no resources and who are aged, blind or disabled.

The 65,000-person independent, federal agency is headquartered in suburban Baltimore, with offices in Washington, D.C., and in 1,500 other locations nationwide.

Before her appointment by President Bush, Commissioner Barnhart served for more than four years as a member of the Social Security Advisory Board, an independent body created to advise the Congress on Social Security issues and policies.

A former SSA employee, Ms. Barnhart worked in the Office of Family Assistance from 1981-1986, first as Deputy Associate Commissioner and then as Associate Commissioner. She served as minority staff director for the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs from 1986-1990. From 1990-1993, she served as Assistant Secretary for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services, overseeing more than 65 programs, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

During her career, Ms. Barnhart has served as Senator William V. Roth, Jr.'s legislative assistant (1977-1981) and as his campaign manager (1988, 1994 and 2000), and managed her own political and public policy consulting firm.

A graduate of the University of Delaware, Commissioner Barnhart was born in Memphis, Tennessee. She lives in Virginia with her husband and son.